

**Mission:**

To protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.



**Ron DeSantis**  
Governor

**Joseph A. Ladapo, MD, PhD**  
State Surgeon General

**Vision:** To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

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May 6, 2024

Joseph A. Ladapo, MD, PhD  
State Surgeon General  
4052 Bald Cypress Way, Bin A-00  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Dear Dr. Ladapo:

Enclosed is our internal audit report #R-2324-003, *Review of the Department's Background Screening Process*. The report provides an independent evaluation of the Department of Health's (Department) policies, procedures, and processes utilized statewide, with emphasis on the background screening of Department and non-Department employees.

The review was conducted by Shannon M. Egler, CIGA, Senior Management Analyst II, and supervised by Ashlea K. Mincy, CIGA, Director of Auditing.

Management agreed with the findings identified in the report. We will provide you a status update in six months detailing the progress management has made toward addressing the proposed corrective actions included in Appendix A of the report.

If you wish to discuss the report, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Bennett, CIA, CGAP, CIG  
Inspector General

MJB/sme  
Enclosure

cc: Melinda M. Miguel, Chief Inspector General, Executive Office of the Governor  
Samantha Perry, CPA, Office of the Auditor General  
Cassandra G. Pasley, BSN, JD, Chief of Staff  
Antonio D. Dawkins, MPA, PMP, Deputy Secretary for Operations  
Robert Herron, Director, Division of Administration  
Amy Graham, Chief, Personnel & Human Resources Management/Labor Relations





REVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT'S BACKGROUND  
SCREENING PROCESS

Report # R-2324-003 • May 6, 2024

**Purpose of this project:**

We wanted to:

- Evaluate the Department of Health's (Department) current policies, procedures, and processes for background screening and rescreening Department employees and non-Department employees (contracted staff, students, interns, and volunteers).
- Determine if Department and non-Department employees timely undergo background screens and rescreens.

**What we examined:**

- Bureau of Personnel and Human Resource Management (Bureau) policies, procedures, and processes utilized statewide, with emphasis on the background screening of Department and non-Department employees; and
- A sample of Department and non-Department employees background screening and rescreening dates.

**Summary of results:**

While the Bureau has made improvements to the background screening process since our audit in 2019, we identified the following issues that management should address:

- Department and non-Department employees did not always undergo timely background rescreens in accordance with Florida law, rules, and Department policy.
- The Department does not have an effective centralized process to track and monitor non-Department employees.

Additional details follow below. Management's response to the issues noted in this report may be found in **Appendix A**.

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## BACKGROUND

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Section 110.1127, Florida Statutes, requires all persons and employees in positions of special trust, responsibility, or sensitive location undergo level 2 background screenings as a condition of employment and continued employment. Section 435.04, Florida Statutes, defines a level 2 screening as a security background investigation which includes, but not limited to, fingerprinting for statewide criminal history records checks through the Department of Law Enforcement, and national criminal history records checks through the Federal Bureau of Investigations. The security background investigation may also include local criminal records checks through local law enforcement agencies, in certain circumstances. The Bureau is responsible for processing pre-employment background screenings, five-year rescreens, and resolution of section 435.01, Florida Statutes, offenses.

## DETAILED RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our review identified the following opportunities to improve effectiveness and efficiencies in operations:

### **1. Department and non-Department employees did not always undergo timely background rescreens in accordance with Florida law, rules, and Department policy.**

- Section 110.1127(2)(a), Florida Statutes, requires as a condition of employment or continued employment, all persons or employees in positions of special trust or responsibility or sensitive location, as designated by the Department, to undergo employment screening in accordance with Chapter 435, Florida Statutes, using level 2 screening standards, including fingerprinting.
- Section (I)(A), Department Policy 60-5-22, *Background Screening (Background Screening Policy)*, states Department candidates, employees, volunteers, students, and interns must undergo a level 2 background screening, which includes fingerprinting, via a Live Scan machine. All Department positions, including volunteers, students, and interns, are designated as sensitive and require a level 2 background screening.
- Section (I)(G), *Background Screening Policy*, requires all employees to undergo a level 2 rescreening every five years for continued employment.
- Section (IV)(G), *Background Screening Policy*, defines employees as any person receiving a warrant from the state for services rendered. For purposes of this policy, employees also include contractors, students, volunteers, and interns.
- We obtained screening dates from People First and the Bureau, for 1,000 Department employees included in our sample.
- Our testing determined a five-year screening was not timely conducted on 42 of the 1,000 employees sampled (4.2%).
- Additionally, we obtained a list of all non-Department employees from the Bureau and selected a random sample of 500 to review. As of December 2023, 49 non-Department employees were eligible for a level 2 rescreen. Of the 49 non-Department employees identified, 11 (22.5%) in the sample were not timely rescreened.
- Not completing rescreens timely fails to ensure that Department employees and non-Department employees have been screened for continued employment as required by section 110.1127, Florida Statutes.

***We recommend the Bureau of Personnel and Human Resource Management continue to improve the monitoring process to ensure Department and non-Department employees undergo timely background rescreens in accordance with Florida law, rules, and Department policy.***

### **2. The Department does not have an effective centralized process to track and monitor non-Department employees.**

- The Department does not maintain an accurate centralized list to easily identify all non-Department employees.
- Upon our request for a list of all active non-Department employees, the Bureau provided a list of 9,888. The Bureau created the list based on non-Department employees who did not have a separation ticket on record.
- Out of the 500 we randomly selected, 43 (8.6%) were determined to not be active non-Department employees.

- While we could not cite specific authoritative requirements for the Department to develop a process to identify and manage an accounting of all non-Department employees, in order to meet the background screenings and rescreening requirements of the *Background Screening Policy*, the Department must have a current accurate tracking of non-Department employees.

***We recommend the Bureau of Personnel and Human Resource Management continue to improve the process to ensure the Department maintains an accurate centralized list of all non-Department employees to ensure compliance with the Background Screening Policy and any other requirements for those employees.***

## SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Section 20.055, Florida Statutes, charges the Department's Office of Inspector General with responsibility to provide a central point for coordination of activities that promote accountability, integrity, and efficiency in government.

Shannon M. Egler, CIGA, Senior Management Analyst II, conducted the review under the supervision of Ashlea K. Mincy, CIGA, Director of Auditing.

Our methodology included reviewing Florida law, rules, Department policies and procedures, and personnel records. We also interviewed key management, staff, and Bureau personnel.

This project was not an audit, as industry-established auditing standards were not applied. Internal Audit Unit procedures for the performance of reviews were followed and used during this project. This project was conducted in compliance with Quality Standards for Inspections, Evaluations, and Reviews by Offices of Inspector General as recommended by *Principles and Standards for Offices of Inspectors General*, Association of Inspectors General.

We want to thank management and staff in the Department's Bureau for the information and documentation they provided, and for their cooperation throughout the project.

All final reports are available on our website at [www.FloridaHealth.gov](http://www.FloridaHealth.gov) (search: internal audit). If you have questions or comments, please contact us by the following means:

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**APPENDIX A: MANAGEMENT RESPONSE**

	Recommendation	Management Response
1	<p><i>We recommend the Bureau of Personnel and Human Resource Management continue to improve the monitoring process to ensure Department and non-Department employees undergo timely background rescreens in accordance with Florida law, rules, and Department policy.</i></p>	<p>We concur.</p> <p>The Bureau of Personnel &amp; Human Resource Management (Bureau) will continue to announce the importance of working five-year rescreen tickets timely on personnel liaison calls, Health Officer calls, and Division of Administration calls. The Bureau will continue to push the importance of Health Officers using the metrics in FLHealthDesk-HR to ensure these ticket types are being worked.</p> <p>Contact: Amy Graham / Penny White</p> <p>Anticipated Completion Date: December 31, 2024</p>
2	<p><i>We recommend the Bureau of Personnel and Human Resource Management continue to improve the process to ensure the Department maintains an accurate centralized list of all non-Department employees to ensure compliance with the Background Screening Policy and any other requirements for those employees.</i></p>	<p>We concur.</p> <p>The Bureau is currently working on a process to ensure all non-Department employees (Contractors, Interns, and Vendors) are separated timely.</p> <p>Contact: Amy Graham / Penny White</p> <p>Anticipated Completion Date: December 31, 2024</p>